

Abram W. Pike House (Now Grand Rapids Art Gallery)
230 East Fulton Street
Kent County, Grand Rapids, Michigan

MI-
HABS No. 27-10
HABS
MICH
41-GRARA
1

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 27

Historic American Buildings Survey
Branson V. Gamber, District Officer
3500 Union Guardian Building, Detroit, Michigan

HABS
MICH.
HI. GRARA

ABRAM W. PIKE HOUSE
Now Grand Rapids Art Gallery at
230 East Fulton Street
Grand Rapids, Kent County
Michigan

Owner: Grand Rapids Art Gallery.

Date of Erection: 1845.

Architect and Builder: No records.

Present Condition:

Number of Stories: Two, central part; one story wings.

Materials of Construction: Wood.

Other Existing Records: See text.¹

Additional Data: See following pages.

¹ For illustration see Major, H., Domestic Architecture of the Early American Republic, 83.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MICH
41-GRARA
-1-

District #27 - 10

April 28, 1934.

page 2

ABRAM W. PIKE HOUSE

#230 EAST FULTON STREET, GRAND RAPIDS,

KENT COUNTY - MICHIGAN

Now known as the Grand Rapids Art Gallery.

HISTORICAL:

Built in 1845 by Abram W. Pike, who came to Grand Rapids in 1844 after being since 1838, in the employ of the Port Sheldon Company. This was a group of Philadelphia capitalists who endeavored to establish a metropolis on the shores of Lake Michigan and had erected a group of buildings there, among them being a hotel called "The Ottawa House" and a depot building for the proposed railroad. The design of the hotel was said to have been taken from the United States Bank at Philadelphia.

At the collapse of the company's project, Mr. Pike brought four of the six columns from the Ottawa House to Grand Rapids for the front portico of his house. The four small columns for the side porticos came from the depot building. The large columns were cut down in height from approximately seven and one-half diameters to nearly six and one-third diameters. They show excellent workmanship and it is inconceivable that they were built in the wilderness at Port Sheldon. No doubt, they were part of the main bulk of building material which is recorded to have been brought to the site on scows in 1836. Therefore, the columns were probably manufactured in Detroit.

An old picture of the Pike House in Baxter's History and an old photograph in the possession of Mr. George Fitch of Grand Rapids shows two original fireplace chimneys just to the south of the main front portico. There were formerly fireplaces in the front room, now the office, and in the east room which is now part of the East Gallery. The position

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

41-GRARA

1-

District #27 - 10

April 28, 1934.

ABRAM W. PIKE HOUSE

#230 EAST FULTON STREET, GRAND RAPIDS,

KENT COUNTY - MICHIGAN

of the chimney is clearly shown in the roof construction of the building. The pictures also show that two of the present window openings to the side porches were originally doors with shutters to the floor.

The original building extended back only as far as the present exterior pilasters on the East and West sides. The cornice clearly shows where the additional work was added. The low East and West portions extended farther back than the central second story part leaving a porch enclosed on three sides across the South. In plan, there was a hall back of the front entrance with a single-flight stair case and two bed rooms on the second floor.

REFERENCES:

Above dates and names are taken from Baxter's History of Grand Rapids, published in 1891.

The Port Sheldon episode is taken from the following sources:

History of Grand Haven and Ottawa County by George C. Lillie, 1931.

History of Grand Rapids, by Goss.

Memorials of the Grand River Valley by Franklin Everett, 1878.

Newspaper files of Grand Rapids Herald, May 1, 1921.

Mr. Dale of Grand Rapids who helped to build the Pike House, now deceased, confirmed the fact to Mr. George Fitch that the columns were "brought in over the snow with ox teams."

Warren L. Rindge,
H.A.B.S. - Member.

Reviewed 1936, H.C. Forman

Addendum to
Abraham Pike House (Grand Rapids Art Gallery)
230 E. Fulton Street
Grand Rapids
Kent County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-27-10

HABS
MICH,
41-GRARA,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

page 4

STATE Michigan	COUNTY Kent	TOWN OR VICINITY Grand Rapids
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Abraham Pike House		HABS NO.
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Grand Rapids Art Gallery		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 230 E. Fulton Street		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1845	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Abraham W. Pike, Builder	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Abraham W. Pike was a prosperous businessman and active public servant in the town of Grand Rapids. This is a good example of ante-bellum Greek Revival style.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Greek Revival		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Wood frame; brick addition		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) 55' x 64'; two stories		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Pilasters at corners; Greek Doric portico; one story wings; front pillars are from Port Sheldon where they once were part of a lake front hotel that was demolished.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Most of the interior was altered when the house was converted to an art gallery in 1921.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES 1920-1921 -- interior altered; brick fireproof addition at rear of house added to store valuable paintings		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Art gallery; good condition		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) <u>Greek Revival Architecture in America</u> , Talbot Hamlin, New York, Dover Publications, 1944; <u>The Story of Grand Rapids</u> , Z.Z. Lydens, ed., Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 1966.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Melissa McDonald HABS Historian		DATE 6-27-83